

The City Grapevine

April/May 2005



Traffic and Transportation

The 2004 Citizen Priorities Survey indicated citizens are concerned about transportation and traffic. We began to address these concerns in the last issue of *The City Grapevine*. In this issue, we plan to address more areas of interest.

Are signals in downtown St. Charles synchronized and have improvements been made to them?

The downtown signals are synchronized. The City worked with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) in 2002 on a computer model of traffic signal operations using traffic count data observed in the field. This simulation identified discrepancies in the coordination between signals along IL 64 (Main Street) between 7th Ave. and 7th St. The computer software also modeled ways to optimize signal coordination. The updated traffic signal synchronization along IL 64 was installed in 2003 and also coordinates with the Illinois corridor just two blocks south. Since 2003, City staff have been monitoring downtown traffic signal performance weekly and promptly addressing signal malfunctions.

How long does it take to drive through the downtown?

Generally, it takes 3 minutes and 45 seconds to drive from 7th Ave. to 7th St. on Main St. This is based on data collected over the past 18 months, driving westbound on Wednesdays at 4 p.m.

Are there improvements proposed for the intersection of IL 64 (Main Street) and IL 31, in

particular, the addition of a left-turn lane for motorists traveling south on IL 31 to east IL 64?

The intersection of IL 64 (Main Street) and IL 31 is under the jurisdiction of the State of Illinois. At this time, there is no State project that would provide for any improvement at this intersection or along the IL 31 approach to IL 64 (Main Street).

Are the traffic signals on Randall and Kirk Roads synchronized?

Traffic signals along Kirk and Randall Roads are under the jurisdiction of Kane County. The Kane County Division of Transportation (KDOT) advises that the traffic signals along Kirk Road are presently synchronized. Randall Road also has synchronized and interconnected traffic signals.

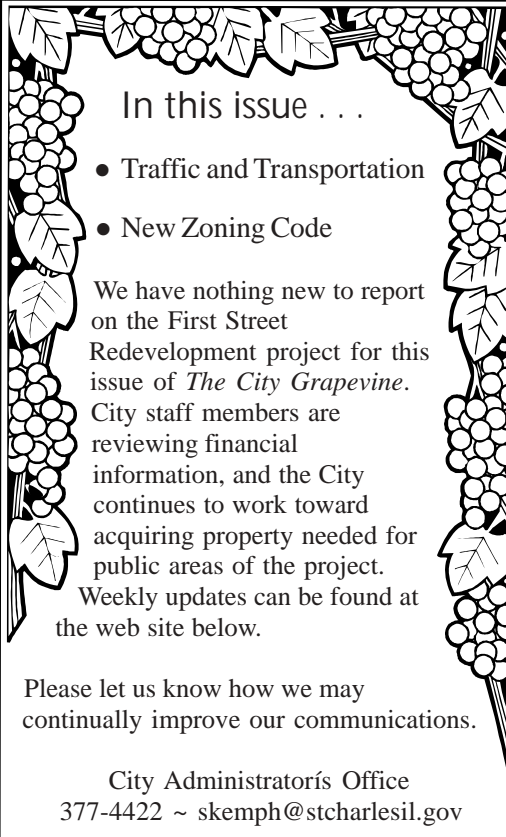
Is traffic congestion an issue in other communities?

Yes. As motorists, we have all experienced traffic congestion, in particular, during the morning and evening rush. In reading the local and regional newspapers and citizen comments about time spent on the daily commute, congestion is a growing concern locally and nationally. Perspective also impacts a driver's awareness of congestion. A visitor from Oak Park may find traffic in St. Charles acceptable, while a resident may find the

increasing traffic and related congestion overwhelming.

What can motorists do to avoid traffic congestion?

- Make cross-town trips outside the peak morning and evening rush hours.
- Look for alternative routes for crossing the Fox River, such as the Illinois and Prairie Street Bridges in lieu of the IL 64 (Main Street) Bridge.



In this issue . . .

- Traffic and Transportation
- New Zoning Code

We have nothing new to report on the First Street Redevelopment project for this issue of *The City Grapevine*. City staff members are reviewing financial information, and the City continues to work toward acquiring property needed for public areas of the project. Weekly updates can be found at the web site below.

Please let us know how we may continually improve our communications.

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- Be aware of construction projects, look for the posted detours or find other routes to bypass the construction zone.
- Consider carpooling, public transportation, walking or bicycling.

New Zoning Ordinance

Zoning regulates how land can be used and how intensively it can be developed. Typically, zoning creates a variety of districts designed to implement a community's Comprehensive Plan for future development. Everything from putting up a fence to developing a shopping center is governed by zoning.

Why does the City need to rewrite the ordinance?

St. Charles' current zoning ordinance was enacted in 1960 and amended numerous times. It contains outdated provisions and lacks specific requirements for aesthetic design, landscaping and lighting. It does not provide clear options for mixed-use neighborhoods, like the downtown area, and was not designed to maintain the character of older neighborhoods.

Recognizing these deficiencies, the City Council formed a Zoning Commission in 2002 to prepare a new ordinance. The Zoning Commission includes citizens, representatives of various City boards and commissions, and representatives from the private sector. Through focus groups, interviews, and a Public Forum in September 2003, the Commission gathered community input to ensure the new ordinance addresses the true needs and desires of the community. A draft is now available for public review.

What are the major changes to the new draft ordinance and how has this been accomplished?

- The proposed residential districts (estate, suburban, traditional and multi-family) will support and enhance existing development patterns. The suburban district represents post WWII development, while the traditional districts accommodate *and preserve* older, pre-WWII neighborhoods.
- Advisory architectural consultations for tear-downs, infills, and additions within traditional residential districts will be required. Residential design guidelines will provide guidance to homeowners and developers.
- The maximum height in the multi-family residential district will be increased from 3 to 4 stories.
- A CBD-2 (Periphery Central Business District) will be added to provide a properly scaled mixed-use transition between single-family residential neighborhoods and the retail core of the Central Business District.

- A BT Overlay is proposed to replace the existing B-2T District. The BT Overlay would be available only in the Traditional Residential Districts. It permits the conversion of single-family homes into office, low intensity service and retail uses. Special standards for eligibility have been proposed to minimize impact to adjacent residential properties.
- The proposed M-1 (Special Manufacturing District) will accommodate older industrial areas within the city that are either in transition from manufacturing to alternative uses or are in need of rehabilitation. Flexibility is provided in design and parking standards to allow for adaptive reuse and/or redevelopment.
- Design reviews comprising site plan review and architectural review will be required for all non-residential, townhome and multi-family uses prior to issuance of building permits and will be conducted by staff. Design review will not be required for single-family and two-family uses.
- Pole signs will be prohibited in all districts. Signs that become non-conforming due to the new code must be made conforming or be removed within 10 years of the adoption of the new ordinance. Previously non-conforming signs must comply with the new ordinance or be removed within 3 years. A sign plan will be required as part of the design review process.
- Site lighting standards are proposed that will regulate intensity and design of fixtures to minimize disturbance to adjacent properties or interference with traffic safety.
- Prior to issuance of building permits, landscape plans will be reviewed as part of the design review process for conformance with the new landscaping standards. Rigorous standards for parking lot landscaping, landscape buffers, and foundation landscaping are being presented.
- Some existing special uses will become non-conforming, but will be treated as legal non-conforming uses.

Opportunity for Public Feedback

The draft ordinance will be presented at four public forums, at 7 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 2 East Main St.

April 12, 2005	Downtown
April 26, 2005	Commercial/Manufacturing, Parking, Signage, landscaping
May 10, 2005	Residential
May 24, 2005	Mapping; Design Review

Citizen feedback is encouraged. Please contact Bob Hupp, Director of Community Development, or Rita Tungare, Senior Planner, at (630) 377-4443 for more information. Updates will be available on the City's web site at <http://www.stcharlesil.gov/departments/cdd/newzoningordinance.html/>.

